

*Would some special equipment help you make better personal use of the telephone?*



### **What is the Telecommunications Equipment Purchase Program (TEPP)?**

The TEPP is to help people with disabilities buy equipment they need in order to use basic telephone services. The TEPP is one of several different programs paid for by the Wisconsin Universal Service Fund (USF) established by the Public Service Commission. Money collected from Wisconsin telephone service providers goes into the USF.

### **This sounds too good to be true!** **What's the catch?**

There is NO CATCH, all you do is request the simple application form, fill it out and mail it in.

### **The few rules are that an applicant:**

- Be a Wisconsin resident.
- Be a person who is deaf, hard of hearing, speech impaired, or mobility or motion impaired.
- Need special equipment to use the telephone in your home or when traveling (like a TTY, volume control, visual alert system, etc.).

There's no age or income limit, but the same household can only get TEPP money once every three years for the same type of disability. (For example, just one voucher even if two or more deaf people is in the same household.)

### **How much will TEPP pay?**

The amount depends on your disability. On the form, you check off which disability affects your telephone use. You will be mailed a voucher (like a check) for the amount you are qualified to get. These amounts were set based on the usual cost of the equipment needed.

### **Below are the maximum voucher amounts allowed for each type of disability:**

Type of disability	Amount
Hard of Hearing (HH)	\$200
Deaf/Severely HH	500
Speech Impaired	1,500
Mobility Impaired	1,500
Deaf with low vision	2,500
Deaf and Blind	6,700



### **How much do I have to pay?**

You pay the first \$100. The voucher pays the rest, up to the maximum voucher amount. If you buy equipment that is more expensive than the voucher plus your \$100, you must also pay the extra charges. For example, if you mark “Deaf/Severely HH” as your disability, you will get a voucher for \$500. If you buy equipment with a total cost of \$618, you will pay \$118.

### **What if I can’t afford the \$100?**

The Wisconsin Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (WDHH) has a special program -- the Telecommunication Assistance Program (TAP). This is only for qualified persons who are deaf, deaf blind, or hard of hearing. Unlike TEPP, TAP does have income requirements. But, this separate, state funded program pays the \$100 TEPP co-payment if you qualify.

### **How do I get TAP to pay the \$100?**

The TEPP and TAP application form are combined. For TAP, you must fill out the household income lines and you also need to send a hearing loss certificate. You must add up all income for everyone living in your house. If your total household income meets the TAP income limits your application will automatically be processed for a TEPP and TAP voucher so your voucher may include the \$100 co-payment.

### **What kind of phone equipment will TEPP allow me to buy?**

- ☎ TTY
- ☎ Amplified handset or phone
- ☎ Telebraille/TTY unit
- ☎ TTY with large visual display
- ☎ Special modem
- ☎ Hands-free speaker phone
- ☎ Puff activator
- ☎ Phone signaling system using flashing lights, a vibrator or a loud bell, and
- ☎ Other specialized equipment may be approved on an individual basis

### **How do I get an application?**

To get a TEPP application form, or answers to your questions, call or write:

**Public Service Commission**  
**P.O. Box 7854**

**Madison, WI 53707-7854**

☎ (608) 267-1479 TTY

☎ (608) 231-3305 Voice

☎ (608) 266-3957 Fax

[pscsecs@psc.state.wi.us](mailto:pscsecs@psc.state.wi.us) E-Mail

### **OR, contact:**

- ☎ The Wisconsin Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at:  
(608) 243-5626 Voice/TTY
- ☎ The Office for Persons with Physical Disabilities or an Independent Living Center at: (608) 267-9582 Voice  
(608) 267-9880 TTY
- ☎ Your local telephone company
- ☎ Vendors of specialized equipment.

### **Where do I mail my TEPP form?**

Send completed applications to:

**USF Administrator**  
**Williams, Young and Assocs., LLC**  
**P.O. Box 8700**  
**Madison, WI 53708-8700**  
(608) 274-1980 Voice  
(608) 274-4448 TTY  
(608) 274-8085 Fax

### **When will I receive the voucher?**

It takes three weeks from the time you mail an application to process it and mail a voucher to you. It takes two or more weeks longer if you apply for TAP also. **If you have questions about the status of your application you may call or write the USF administrator.**

If money is not available when your application arrives, TEPP will hold your application in the order it is received until money is available.

### **How do I use a TEPP voucher?**

Choose your equipment and where you want to buy it. Use the voucher (like a check) to pay the vendor for your qualifying special equipment. You pay: 1) \$100, if not TAP qualified, 2) for any purchase amount over the total of the voucher plus your \$100, and 3) for any non-qualifying items purchased.

